

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

ANDREW PROKOS,

Plaintiff,

- against -

PAULINE SIMPSON, and DOES 1-10,

Defendants.

Case No.: 18-cv-4529

PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT FOR  
(1) COPYRIGHT  
INFRINGEMENT; (2) VICARIOUS  
AND/OR CONTRIBUTORY  
COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiff Andrew Prokos ("Plaintiff"), by and through his undersigned attorneys, hereby prays for relief based on the following:

**JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

1. This action arises under the Copyright Act of 1976, Title 17 U.S.C., § 101 *et seq.*
2. This Court has federal question jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 1338 (a) and (b).
3. Venue in this judicial district is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(c) and 1400(a) in that Defendant Pauline Simpson's principal place of business is in this district, and this is the judicial district in which a substantial part of the acts and omissions giving rise to the claims occurred.

**PARTIES**

4. Plaintiff Andrew Prokos is a renowned professional photographer, with his principal place of business in New York, New York, and is doing business within the state of New York.
5. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendant Pauline Simpson ("Defendant") is a licensed real estate agent operating under the laws of New York with a place of business in Queens County, New York.

6. Defendants DOES 1-10, inclusive, are other parties not yet identified who have infringed Plaintiff's copyrights, have contributed to the infringement of Plaintiff's copyrights, or have engaged in one or more of the wrongful practices alleged herein. The true names, whether corporate, individual or otherwise, of Defendants 1 through 10, inclusive, are presently unknown to Plaintiff, who therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names, and will seek leave to amend this Complaint to show their true names and capacities when same have been ascertained.

7. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that at all times relevant hereto each of the Defendants was the agent, affiliate, officer, director, manager, principal, alter-ego, and/or employee of the remaining Defendants and was at all times acting within the scope of such agency, affiliation, alter-ego relationship and/or employment; and actively participated in or subsequently ratified and adopted, or both, each and all of the acts or conduct alleged, with full knowledge of all the facts and circumstances, including, but not limited to, full knowledge of each and every violation of Plaintiff's rights and the damages to Plaintiff proximately caused thereby.

### **CLAIMS RELATED TO PLAINTIFF'S PHOTOGRAPH**

8. Plaintiff is a renowned professional artist who earns his livelihood through the sale and licensing of his photographs and photography services.

9. Plaintiff created a photograph of a brownstone building in Harlem in 2013. This photograph (the "Subject Photograph") is the subject of this dispute. The title of the Subject Photograph is "HARLEM-0446-1000PX.jpeg." The Subject Photograph is an original photograph composed by Plaintiff. Plaintiff is the owner of the photograph, which was registered with the United States Copyright Office before the infringement at issue. A true and correct copy of the Subject Photograph is reproduced below:



10. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants operate a website at [www.realtor.com](http://www.realtor.com), where they advertise for business.

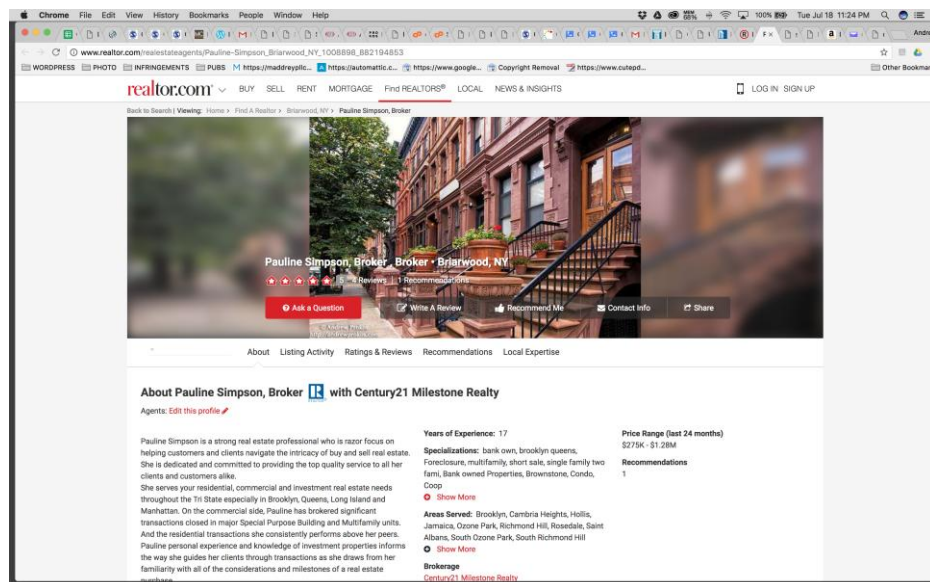
11. Plaintiff's investigation revealed that Defendants, and each of them, were displaying Plaintiff's Subject Photograph ("Infringing Photograph") on their website, ([www.realtor.com/realestateagents/Pauline\\_Simpson](http://www.realtor.com/realestateagents/Pauline_Simpson)), without Plaintiff's authorization.

Defendants used the Infringing Photograph to market and advertise Defendants' own businesses.

12. Defendants do not and never had authorization to use the Subject Photograph.

13. A true and correct screenshot of Defendants' infringing use of the Subject Photograph on their website is reproduced below:

"Infringing Photograph";



**FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

(For Copyright Infringement – Against all Defendants, and Each)

14. Plaintiff repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates herein by reference as though fully set forth, the allegations contained in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.

15. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, had access to the Subject Photograph, including, without limitation, through viewing the Subject Photograph on the World Wide Web.

16. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, used and displayed the Subject Photograph on [www.realtor.com](http://www.realtor.com).

17. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that the Infringing Photographs used by Defendants and shown above, uses the same elements, composition, colors, arrangement, subject, lighting, angle, and overall appearance of the Plaintiff's Subject Photographs and are identical or at least substantially similar to Plaintiff's Subject Photograph.

18. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, infringed Plaintiff's copyright by copying the Subject Photograph and publishing and displaying the Infringing Photographs to the public, including without limitation, on [www.realtor.com](http://www.realtor.com) without Plaintiff's authorization or consent.

19. Due to Defendants', and each of their, acts of infringement, Plaintiff has suffered general and special damages in an amount to be established at trial.

20. Due to Defendants' acts of copyright infringement as alleged herein, Defendants, and each of them, have obtained direct and indirect profits they would not otherwise have realized but for their infringement of Plaintiff's rights in the Subject Photograph. As such, Plaintiff is entitled to disgorgement of Defendants' profits directly and indirectly attributable to Defendants' infringement of his rights in the Subject Photograph in an amount to be established at trial.

21. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, have committed acts of copyright infringement, as alleged above, which were willful, intentional and malicious, which further subjects Defendants, and each of them, to liability for statutory damages under Section 504(c)(2) of the Copyright Act in the sum of up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000.00) per infringement. Within the time permitted by law, Plaintiff will make his election between actual damages and statutory damages.

**SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

(For Vicarious and/or Contributory Copyright Infringement – Against all Defendants, and Each)

22. Plaintiff repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates herein by reference as though fully set forth, the allegations contained in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.

23. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants knowingly induced, participated in, aided and abetted in and profited from the illegal reproduction and distribution of the Subject Photograph as alleged hereinabove.

24. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, are vicariously liable for the infringement alleged herein because they had the right and ability to supervise the infringing conduct and because they had a direct financial interest in the infringing conduct.

25. By reason of the Defendants', and each of their, acts of contributory and vicarious infringement as alleged above, Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer substantial damages to his business in an amount to be established at trial, as well as additional general and special damages in an amount to be established at trial.

26. Due to Defendants' acts of copyright infringement as alleged herein, Defendants, and each of them, have obtained direct and indirect profits they would not otherwise have realized but for their infringement of Plaintiff's rights in the Subject Photograph. As such, Plaintiff is

entitled to disgorgement of Defendants' profits directly and indirectly attributable to Defendants' infringement of his rights in the Subject Photograph, in an amount to be established at trial.

27. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, have committed acts of copyright infringement, as alleged above, which were willful, intentional and malicious, which further subjects Defendants, and each of them, to liability for statutory damages under Section 504(c)(2) of the Copyright Act in the sum of up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000.00) per infringement. Within the time permitted by law, Plaintiff will make his election between actual damages and statutory damages.

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

Wherefore, Plaintiff prays for judgment as follows:

**Against all Defendants, and Each:**

**With Respect to Each Claim for Relief:**

- a. That Defendants, and each of them, as well as their employees, agents, or anyone acting in concert with them, be enjoined from infringing Plaintiff's copyright in the Subject Photograph, including, without limitation, an order requiring Defendants, and each of them, to remove the Infringing Photographs from any print, web, or other publication owned, operated or controlled by any Defendant.
- b. That Plaintiff be awarded all profits of Defendants, and each of them, plus all losses of Plaintiff, plus any other monetary advantage gained by the Defendants, and each of them, through their infringement, the exact sum to be proven at the time of trial, and, to the extent available, statutory damages as available under the 17 U.S.C. § 504, 17 U.S.C. §1203, and other applicable law.

- c. That a constructive trust be entered over any revenues or other proceeds realized by Defendants, and each of them, through their infringement of Plaintiff's intellectual property rights;
- d. That Plaintiff be awarded his attorneys' fees as available under the Copyright Act U.S.C. § 101 et seq.;
- e. That Plaintiff be awarded his costs and fees under the statutes set forth above;
- f. That Plaintiff be awarded statutory damages and/or penalties under the statutes set forth above;
- g. That Plaintiff be awarded pre-judgment interest as allowed by law;
- h. That Plaintiff be awarded the costs of this action; and
- i. That Plaintiff be awarded such further legal and equitable relief as the Court deems proper.

Plaintiff demands a jury trial on all issues so triable pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 38 and the 7<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Dated: August 10, 2018

Respectfully submitted:

By: /S/ Michael D. Steger  
Michael D. Steger  
Law Offices of Michael D. Steger, PC  
30 Ramland Road, Suite 201  
Orangeburg, NY 10962  
845-359-4600  
(845) 689-2155 (fax)  
[msteger@steger-law.com](mailto:msteger@steger-law.com)  
Attorney for Plaintiff